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Hofmeister, Heather; Hünefeld, Lena; Proch, Celina

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Heather Hofmeister, Lena Hünefeld & Celina Proch

The role of job-related spatial mobility in the household division of labor within couples in Germany and Poland

Die Rolle berufsbezogener Mobilität in der Hausarbeitsteilung in Partnerschaften in Deutschland und Polen

Abstract:

This paper will examine the self-reported division of housework and childcare in Germany and Poland considering the job-related spatial mobility within dual-earner couples who are living in a household together with a partner, using 2007 data from the *Job Mobility and Family Lives in Europe* Project. We find that men who are spatially mobile for work often report shifting housework to their partners. Polish couples show a stronger tendency toward an egalitarian division of labor than German couples do, especially in terms of childcare. But the central finding of this research is, gender trumps national differences and spatial mobility constraints. Polish and German women, whether mobile for their work or not, report doing the majority of housework and childcare compared to their partners.

Key words: job-related spatial mobility, gender, division of household labor, childcare, cross-national comparison Germany and Poland

Zusammenfassung:

Dieser Artikel untersucht die Aufteilung von Hausarbeit und Kinderbetreuung auf Basis von Selbsteinschätzungen berufsbedingt räumlich mobiler sowie nicht mobiler Befragter in Deutschland und Polen. Anhand von Daten des Projektes *Job Mobility and Family Lives in Europe* (2007) betrachten wir Personen, die mit ihrem Partner in einem Doppelverdienerhaushalt leben. So geben beruflich mobile Männer häufig an, die Hausarbeit auf ihre Partner zu übertragen. Polnische Paare zeigen eine stärkere Tendenz zu einer egalitären Arbeitsteilung als deutsche, insbesondere im Hinblick auf die Kinderbetreuung. Das zentrale Ergebnis unserer Untersuchung ist jedoch, dass das Geschlecht sowohl Mobilitäts- als auch nationale Unterschiede überlagert. Sowohl polnische als auch deutsche Frauen, ob beruflich mobil oder nicht, übernehmen den Hauptanteil an der Hausarbeit und Kinderbetreuung.

Schlagwörter: berufliche räumliche Mobilität, Gender, Hausarbeit und Kinderbetreuung, nationaler Vergleich Deutschland und Polen

1. Introduction

In the last decades across Europe, rapid changes in technology, travel possibilities, and labor markets, among other factors, have increased the rate of spatial mobility (Limmer 2005; Hofmeister/Blossfeld/Mills 2006; Sennett 2000; Haas/Hamann 2008; Beck-Gernsheim 1995). In this paper we examine data on partnered men and women in Poland and Germany to ask whether frequent circular (regularly occurring) mobility has an effect on the division

of household labor in couples, considering national context and family status. Circular mobiles are either “long-distance commuters,” defined as those who need at least 120 minutes a day to get to and from work and do so at least three times a week, or “overnighters,” those who spend at least 60 nights in the last year away from home on job-related business (Limmer/Schneider 2008). Within this context, questions of interest are: Is a high level of repeated spatial mobility for the job related to new patterns in the typically-gendered housework division and in childcare? Does a parent confronted with job-related spatial mobility do less housework than a parent who is not job-related spatially mobile? How does gender mediate this division? And do national cultural norms have a noticeable influence on the way the housework and childcare are divided? What effect have 40 years of socialism had on the way couples divide their labor at home, with attention to the influence of the commuting or frequent overnight business trips of one or the other partner?

A body of research on spatial mobility – to relocate for the job, to commute a long distance, to spend frequent overnights away from home for business, or to have a partnership in which both partners work in different cities – has focused on work and family relations (Schneider 2005; Jürges 2005; Hagemann-White/Hantsche/Westerburg 1996; Bonnet/Collet/Maurines 2006, Schneider/Meil 2008; Schneider/Collett 2010). These findings show that aspects of mobility can cause difficulties in reconciling job and family. For example, men are more likely to be mobile for their jobs, which reinforces women’s task allocation to childcare and housework (Schneider/Limmer/Ruckdeschel 2002). Furthermore, mobile women remain childless more often than mobile men do (Schneider/Meil 2008). While the mobility of men is largely independent of family status, parenthood has an influence on the mobility of women: in a recent study, women reported that their mobility had an influence on their timing of children, and results also indicate that the mobility of mothers is far below that of women who are not parents (Ruppenthal/Lück 2009).

The national context of spatial mobility has been an important research topic. The first analysis of the project *Job Mobilities and Family Lives in Europe* suggests that nearly every second European has experience with job-related spatial mobility over his or her active working years (Schneider/Meil 2008). But the results have shown a strong differentiation in the likelihood to be mobile by gender and by nationality.

For this paper, we compare Germany and Poland as countries which are close neighbors but have quite different cultural, political, and historical backgrounds which influence gender relations, family organization, and spatial mobility. We analyze how job related mobility, family, and gender interact within the different national contexts. Especially with regard to the influence of mobility on gender relations in society as well as in intimate relationships, we are interested in the way gender roles could be reinforced or transformed by mobility. Our analysis focuses on three key questions:

- In what ways have national contexts, including the legacies of socialism, the religious influences of Catholicism, and economic challenges, left an imprint on the daily division of labor and child care in Poland¹ compared to Germany, regardless of job-related mobility? Here we establish a baseline before moving on to questions about mobility effects.

¹ Our sample size for the federal states that belonged to the former East Germany is too small to allow an analysis on German East-West differences. The majority of the German sample is from the western states.

- Does job-related spatial mobility reinforce or transform the traditional task allocation regarding housework and childcare between women and men in Germany and in Poland?
- Are childless women and men more likely to be recurrently job-mobile than mothers and fathers are? Is there a detectable nation-specific influence on the role of parenthood in affecting mobility?

2. Theoretical framework/background

2.1 The cultural context of Germany and Poland

Although Germany and Poland share a border, they are two differing countries with diverse ideas regarding the roles of women and men in society. Polish national culture in the early 21st century shows a cleft between the interests of the state and the church. From 1945 to 1989, Poland was under socialist rule. Women were required by law to participate fully in the labor market. The church, on the other hand, holds steadfast to the traditional role of women as homemakers and mothers (Rudolph/Klement 2006). Since the dissolution of socialism in 1989, the influence of the church has grown, but so has the financial pressure on families, which, in turn, encourages women's full-time employment. This duality of women's roles is also reflected in the coexistence of two contrasting overall models of women: the sustainable impact of the image of the "socialist woman," who takes part in the labor force, versus the "Matka Polka" (Polish Mother), whose responsibility lies in reproduction and family care (Keinz 2008: 97). Family is considered to be the building block of Polish society (Fodor et al. 2002: 480).

Thus two diverging ideologies reign in Poland, exposing women to ambivalent expectations. In times of socialism the "socialist woman" was favored. However, since 1989 a renaissance of traditional values has come along with the process of democratization (Binder 2003: 675). In the first decade of the 21st century, images of women function to project traditional values, to symbolize a constant factor in times of social change. This is also seen in the political sphere, especially in several party platforms where women are expected to concentrate on family issues and not act as public and political persons (Choluj/Neusüß 2004: 187). Since the fall of the socialist system, the social environment, including economic relief for families, has changed, and state childcare facilities have been reduced. This situation confronts women with ambivalence in everyday life: On the one hand they need to support the family financially, but on the other hand, the primary family work is ascribed to them.

Since 1949, Germany has regularized a legal equality of women and men in the constitution wherein both sexes should have equal access to education as well as opportunity to actively participate in the labor force. Yet the life course remains different for men and women (Hofmeister 2009; Hofmeister/Witt 2009). Judging from structural as well as cultural factors, such as very limited public childcare, short school hours, limited or non-existent after-school care for children, and tax policies that favor one main earner, blending paid work and family in Germany is easiest for couples who divide the responsibilities among an "earner" and a "caregiver" (Grunow/Hofmeister/Buchholz 2006; Sauer 2004). Additionally, although the proportion of women participating in the labor market increased,

the majority of couples still practice a role distribution whereby the man earns the money while the woman takes care of home and family (male bread-winner model) (BMFSFJ 2004; Grunow/Hofmeister/Buchholz 2006; Hofmeister/Baur/Röhler 2009; Buchholz/Grunow 2006). Another common belief in Germany is that mothers working for pay are uncaring mothers (Sauer 2004: 121). These beliefs are changing slowly; however, the image of the employed mother as a bad mother persists (Ruckdeschel 2005). These contradictions in part illustrate the cleft among legal, structural, and cultural social organization in Germany.

One part of Germany shares similar historical characteristics with Poland. From 1949 to 1990, East Germany (German Democratic Republic) was a socialist state which promoted full-time female and male employment. East Germany had a norm of fulltime-employed mothers, which it supported through collective childcare. However, the equality of men and women was not followed through to its logical conclusion: while women were fully integrated into working life, they did not experience a substantial reduction of responsibility for the familial and especially the household sector. Men were not integrated equally into housework and childcare, though their actual participation was higher than among men in West Germany (Sauer 2004: 118).

Since German reunification in 1990, the West German political system has predominated, as the majority of the current German population lives in former West Germany with 65.541 Million residents compared to 16.461 million in former East Germany (Statistisches Bundesamt 2008). Having the same legal framework and policies for the last twenty years, one can find more similarities than differences between the realities of women and men in East and West Germany (Rosenzweig 2000).

Although a separate consideration of East and West Germany would be of interest, a low number of East-German respondents (only 34 out of 689 German respondents were born in the former GDR) prevents a separate analysis. We include residents of East and West Germany together in the German sample.

Looking at the 2007² employment rates of women and men in Germany and Poland, in both countries the men constitute the majority of employees (in Germany 75%; in Poland 64%) (Eurostat 2009). The female employment rate is slightly lower, with 64% of German women employed, compared to 51% of Polish women. National differences concerning the demands on roles of women are also reflected in the scope of work. Focusing on part-time employment, 46% of employed German women and 9% of employed German men work part-time, whereas in Poland only 13% of employed women and 7% of employed men are part-time employed. Aside from the fact that more Polish women are employed full-time, the amount of working hours is higher in Poland than it is in Germany (Eurostat 2009). In Germany, part-time work of women serves to help reconcile competing demands of work and family, but in Poland, the question arises how full-time workers, especially women, combine the demands of the labor market with those of their families.

2.2 The division of labor between partners in the domestic sphere

Despite the increasing participation of women in the labor market, the gendered division of household labor between men and women persists, whereby women carry the heavier

2 We have taken the statistics of 2007 intentionally to correspond with the data we use for this paper.

load at home (European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions 2007, Treas/Drobnič 2010). Results from the Fourth European Working Conditions Surveys reveal that more women working for pay than working men devote time outside of work to family responsibilities such as childcare, housework, or cooking. Indeed, on average, men have worked more hours per week than women in their paid jobs, but when paid and unpaid hours are added together, it is women who work the most hours. However, men are more likely to increase their share when their wives work outside the home compared to men whose wives are not employed (Shannon/Greenstein 2004).

For the unequal distribution of domestic work, generally three reasons are cited: first, women are culturally expected to be the primarily responsible person for family duties (Ostner 1993, Fenstermarker et. al 1991; West/Zimmermann 1987). Second, from an economic point of view, women's lower earnings and resulting financial dependency on men means that women's housework is a compensation for men's paid work (Becker 1981, 1995a, 1995b). And finally, longer working hours of men compared to women (Sauer 2004: 130) leave the housework to the person with more time available for it.

In contrast to economic approaches (Krebs 2002; Becker 1995b), sociological theories underline the influence of social values and institutional environment. Especially the "gender display" approach emphasizes that, in most cases, the division of time between partners spent for housework doesn't happen in a benefit-oriented way, but rather as expression of the individual's own gender identity (Berk 1985; Greenstein 2000; Hochschild/Machung 1993). That is, no matter what might be most rational for a specific distribution of labor, the meaning of the housework and the individual's sense of self-expression around performing or avoiding housework play strong roles in determining who will do the work.

In Germany, household chores, family work and gainful employment are not distributed equally among men and women. Women spend 2.3 times more time on household and family care than men do, an expenditure of time that rises with the presence of children in the household (Gershuny 2003). A child increases the time spent on housework for women, in comparison to men, by about half an hour, two children by about one hour, and three or more children by about 2 hours per day (Gershuny 2003). However, the amount of time used by men for household chores is independent of children being present or not (Bucheibner-Ferstl/Rille-Pfeiffer 2008).

In Poland, the specific historical and cultural conditions affect gender equality in the workplace differently from how they are experienced in West Germany. Women in socialist times were employed full-time, although cultural tradition prescribed housework also to women. Public childcare services assisted with some of "the double-burden," but husbands did not step in to do half of the housework (Choluj/Neusűß 2004: 182). Although labor market work was expected from both men and women, policy makers did not intend to transform the men's role within their housework duties and activities (Michon 2009; Fodor et al. 2002: 479-481). Women's overproportional housework has persisted over the transition in 1989 and has even been intensified by the closure of hundreds of public kindergartens and crèches since 1989 (Michon 2009; Fodor et al. 2002: 479-481). By limiting childcare for under-3-year-olds and providing parental leave over a longer period for mothers only, state policies enforced a clear pattern of the gendered division of domestic and parenting work (Fodor et al. 2002: 480). In spite of the difficult

circumstances like underdeveloped childcare support and low wages, female labor force participation is often necessary for the family's well-being. As a result, women shoulder a double burden by working inside and outside the home as well as caring for their children. This can also be illustrated by the results of a Polish study conducted in 2006, where people living with their partners in one household, regardless of employment, have been questioned about cleaning duties. According to the answers of the respondents, 6% of the cleaning is done by men, 61% by women and 33% jointly (CBOS 2006: 2).

To conclude, women are culturally expected to invest their time in both employment as well as household and care work (Klammer 2001). The fact that job-related spatial mobility further limits the available time raises the question if spatial mobility means an additional burden for women or an equal or at least more balanced division of housework duties between partners.

2.3 Job-related mobility

Limmer defines job-related mobility "as spatial movement that takes people on their way to work outside their social surroundings" (cf. Limmer 2005: 97). We assume that mobility needs to hit a certain level of intensity before the influence on work and private life reaches a significant magnitude. That, in turn, will determine the selection of a threshold value of mobility.

Job-related spatial mobility can be divided into two main categories: residential mobility and circular mobility (Schneider/Meil 2008). Residential mobility, or relocation mobility, means a singular event that takes only a short period of time. Circular mobility describes types of mobility that repeat themselves after certain periods of time, such as long distance commutes, overnights, and the maintenance of long distance relationships.

Circular mobility is three times more frequent than residential mobility in Europe, based on results from the *Job Mobility and Family Lives in Europe* study, consisting of 7.220 Europeans from six countries interviewed in 2007 (Ruppenthal/Lück 2009). These data also indicate a higher mobility of men compared to women in all countries of the study (all types of mobility considered together). In total, Germans are more mobile than Poles, with 22% in Germany to 14% in Poland (Schneider/Meil 2008). But men in both countries are more mobile than women: 24% of the German men but only 16% of German women were mobile; in Poland 17% of the men and 11% of the women were mobile. Furthermore, the analyses indicate that parenthood plays a significant role in reducing mobility: of the childless respondents, German women are more likely than German men to be mobile, but German mothers are less mobile than German fathers. In short, women who are mobile for job-related reasons are less often mothers (30%), and mothers are less often mobile. These findings indicate a difficulty for women, but not for men, to combine parenthood and mobility requirements (Schneider/Ruppenthal/Lück/Rüger/Dauber 2008).

In Poland, as in Germany, the family status has a significant influence on the mobility of women, while there is no such effect for men. However, in contrast to Germany, among the mobile women in Poland, mothers are *more* mobile than non-mothers (Poleszczuk/Stec 2008). And Polish mothers are more mobile for occupational reasons than German mothers (Schneider/Meil 2008). Many studies already confirmed that in Germany as well as in Poland, traditional gender roles are predominant and mainly the

women are responsible for household and childcare (Haber Kern 2007; Sauer 2004; Tarkowska 2002). That leaves the question how Polish mobile mothers cope with the requirements of mobility and family needs.

In general, job-related mobility has consequences on the life course (Hofmeister 2002, 2005, 2009; Viry/Hofmeister/Widmer 2010). The time needed to commute to and from work is on top of existing working hours. This expenditure of time is therefore necessarily taken from private life (Hofmeister 2002). Apart from the time expense, mobility requires organization to integrate all everyday demands and to master the schedule. With this in mind, time “lost” to mobility more often than not is compensated for by strictly organizing private life (Schneider 2005).

Furthermore, house and family work require much time (Statistisches Bundesamt 2001/02). A person who needs to be mobile has three major options to meet those time requirements: find a partner who will take care of family and household, reduce or eliminate his or her family bonds to avoid time conflicts between occupation and family, or suffer deficits in one or another life sphere (sleep, free time, family time, or work time) compared to people who have no mobility demands. Schneider (2004: 30) found that one third of the partners of mobile employees perform the family and household duties all alone. The probabilities of choosing these options are gendered: men more often can and do choose the first option, because the supply of female partners willing to care for the home and family is greater than the supply of male partners willing to do so; women are left more often with options 2 and 3 (Schneider 2005). Prior research indicates that mobile men often have partners who relieve them of household tasks completely (Limmer 2005).

Based on the results of previous studies, our hypotheses are:

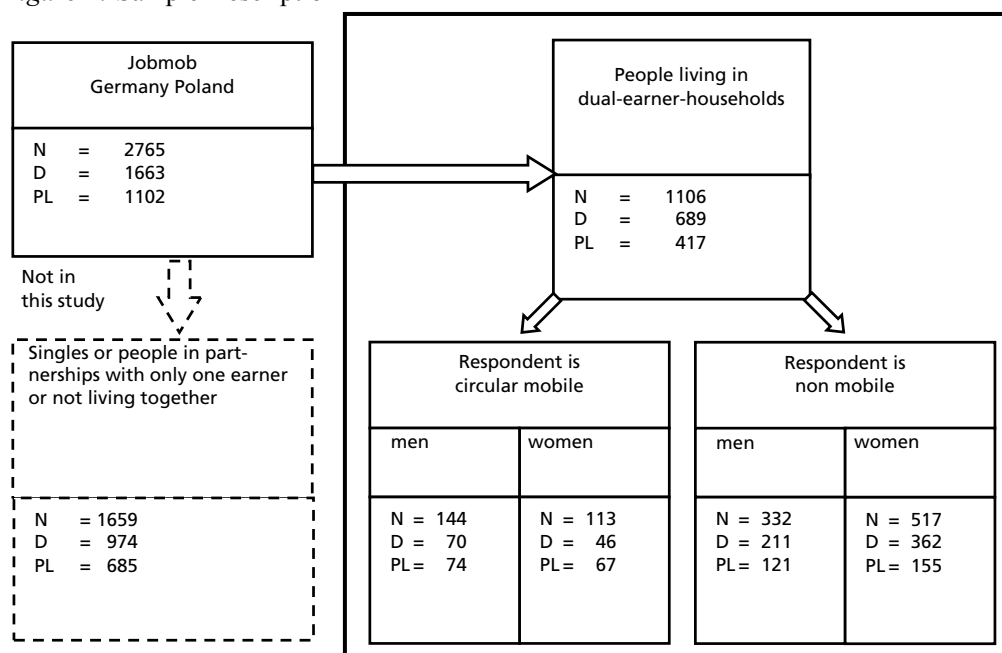
1. Even in cases where both men and women in a relationship work for pay, we hypothesize that women still do the majority of family responsibilities in (1a) housework and (1b) childcare both in Germany and in Poland.
2. The division of (2a) household labor and (2b) childcare is different in Germany and Poland, with Polish families exhibiting a more equal division of labor.
3. The division of (3a) household labor and (3b) childcare is affected by circular mobility in Germany and Poland, meaning that partners who are circularly mobile reduce their housework in comparison to the non-mobile partner.
4. If the woman is the partner who is circularly mobile, an equalization or more balanced sharing of the division of (4a) household and (4b) childcare is more likely.
5. Circular mobility carried by the man in the partnership is likely to be associated with an imbalanced sharing of the division of (5a) household and (5b) childcare, with the man doing much less than his non-mobile female partner.

3. Sample and Methods

We analyze the responses of 1106 participants out of 7220 from the *Job Mobility and Family Lives in Europe* survey, which interviewed residents of six European countries: Belgium, France, Germany, Poland, Spain and Switzerland. The study was led by Norbert F. Schneider at the University of Mainz and funded by the EU 6th Framework Pro-

gramme. In May to August 2007 a total of 7220 interviews were conducted in Germany by phone and in Poland face-to-face, targeting residents aged 25 to 54. The goal of the study was to gain representative data on the distribution of mobile living and to assess advantages and disadvantages of different kinds of mobility. Due to a planned and targeted oversampling of mobile people, and typical overrepresentation of demographic groups in survey data, data we use in the analyses are weighted, calculated per nation (Huynen/Hubert/Lück 2010). The descriptive data we present are unweighted. We focus on persons who are living in a household together with a partner and where both are working for pay³ to ensure that both partners invest time in paid work and therefore the time available for domestic work is limited for both of them. One or both partners could be recurrently (circularly) mobile. Recall that circular mobiles are either “long-distance commuters,” whom we define as commuters travelling at least 120 minutes a day to get to and from work at least three times a week, or they are what we call “overnighters,” spending at least 60 nights in the last year away on job-related business trips (Limmer/Schneider 2008).⁴ Figure 1 describes graphically which groups from the total sample in the *Job Mobility and Family Lives in Europe* survey are in our analysis.

Figure 1: Sample Description



Data: Job Mobility and Family Lives Survey 2007 (unweighted data).

3 Only one of the partners in each couple has participated in the survey.

4 We are interested in examining the degree to which recurring mobility creates challenges to combine working demands and private needs. When we speak of mobility later in the text, we are always referring to circular mobility.

The divisions of household and childcare within the couple were measured by the self-report of the respondent to the questions “Who of you spends time in handling housework?” and “Who cares for children” with the following five parameter values: only you (=1), mainly you (=2), you and your partner equally (=3), mainly your partner (=4), or only your partner (=5). The scale indicates that the higher the value, the more intensely the partner is involved in housework or childcare compared to the respondent. These are our dependent variables of interest. We test whether, in both nations, women handle more of the family duties than men, whether mobile persons are less active in housework and childcare than non-mobile persons, and whether the distribution of housework and childcare is different in Germany and Poland, using mean comparison tests.

We use OLS regression analyses to examine which influence circular mobility has, controlling for relevant socio-demographic variables, on men’s and women’s division of housework and childcare⁵ in Poland and Germany. In the regressions, we tested the interrelation between the dependent variables intensity of partner doing housework and intensity of partner doing childcare and the independent variables, as follows: *Circular mobility* (1=circular mobile), *gender of respondent* (1=female), *parental status* (1=parent of at least one child under age 16 living in the home), *highest level of education completed* (1=tertiary educational level), *weekly work hours* (1= 43 or more hours) are tested. We also consider the effect of *cohort in two age groups* (0=25-35, 1=36-54).⁶ We conclude our analyses with a brief examination of the connection between the actual division of labor and the attitudes toward men’s and women’s roles in each country.

4. Results

At the time of the survey, in Germany, 19.4% of the men and 7.0% of the women living in dual-earner households in our sample were circularly mobile for work. In Poland, 12.6% of the men and 9.0% of the women were circularly mobile. Among circular mobile persons in Germany, the significant majority are men, at 74% ($p<.001$) (only 26% are women). The men are also more mobile than women in Poland, though the difference is not as large, with men comprising 53% of the Polish mobile group and women 47%. We further examine the socio-demographic distributions among mobile and non-mobile workers living in dual-earner couples in Table 1 and Table 2, separately by country.

⁵ Regressions modeling childcare were performed only for parents in the sample.

⁶ Members of the first cohort aged 25-35 were younger than 18 when they experienced fall of the Iron Curtain, whereas persons who are in the second cohort (36-54) experienced at least their first 18 years within a socialist system. We have chosen these specific cohorts because it can be expected that these cohorts grew up in different systems of norms and values which can affect the internalized gender roles (Watson 1992).

Table 1: Frequencies of German men and women, living in partnerships, by mobility status

| Germany | | Non mobile | | Circular mobile | | Total | |
|--|---------------------|-------------|-------------|-----------------|------------|-------------|-------------|
| | | Men % | Women % | Men % | Women % | Men % | Women % |
| Parental status (child under 16) | Yes | 49 (137) | 53 (169) | 48 (32) | 33 (8) | 49 (169) | 52 (177) |
| | No | 51 (141) | 47 (151) | 52 (35) | 67 (16) | 51 (176) | 49 (167) |
| | Total sum | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| | n | (278) | (320) | (67) | (24) | (345) | (344) |
| men p=.823 / women p=.066 | | | | | | | |
| Education | Lower secondary | 66 (172) | 72 (223) | 72 (47) | 48 (11) | 67 (219) | 71 (234) |
| | Post secondary | 14 (36) | 14 (44) | 9 (6) | 22 (5) | 13 (42) | 15 (49) |
| | Tertiary | 20 (53) | 14 (42) | 19 (12) | 30 (7) | 20 (65) | 15 (49) |
| | Total sum | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| men p=.536 / women p<.05 | | | | | | | |
| Work hours | Part-time (17-34h) | 7 (19) | 51 (157) | 3 (2) | 22 (5) | 6 (21) | 49 (162) |
| | Full-time (35h-42h) | 49 (131) | 36 (111) | 39 (25) | 48 (11) | 47 (156) | 37 (122) |
| | Excessive (43+) | 44 | 13 | 58 | 30 | 47 | 15 |
| | Total sum | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| men p=.108 / women p<.05 | | | | | | | |
| Age / cohorts in 10-year categories | 25-34 | 18 (49) | 20 (65) | 17 (11) | 33 (8) | 18 (60) | 21 (73) |
| | 35-44 | 44 (121) | 43 (137) | 32 (21) | 38 (9) | 42 (142) | 42 (146) |
| | 45-54 | 38 (105) | 37 (118) | 52 (34) | 29 (7) | 41 (139) | 36 (125) |
| | Total sum | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| men p=.119 / women p=.317 | | | | | | | |

Data: Job Mobility and Family Lives Survey 2007, employed men and women living in partnerships (unweighted data).

Table 1 illustrates that mobile German women differ significantly from the non-mobile women in the areas of parental status, education, and work hours. Mobile German women are less likely to have children, more likely to have tertiary education, and tend to work longer hours than non-mobile women. Men do not statistically significantly differ by mobile status in these characteristics. For Poland, there is no statistically significant difference between the mobile and non-mobile groups (by gender). The tables indicate the need to look at within-category gender comparisons, which we turn to next.

Table 2: Frequencies of Polish men and women, living in partnerships, by mobility status

| Poland | | Non mobile | | Circular mobile | | Total | |
|--|---------------------|-------------------|--------------|------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| | | Men | Women | Men | Women | Men | Women |
| | | % | % | % | % | % | % |
| Parental status (child under 16) | Yes | 60 | 61 | 56 | 47 | 59 | 60 |
| | | (67) | (87) | (9) | (7) | (76) | (94) |
| | No | 40 | 39 | 44 | 53 | 41 | 40 |
| | | (45) | (55) | (7) | (8) | (52) | (63) |
| Total sum | % | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| | n | (112) | (142) | (16) | (15) | (128) | (157) |
| men p=.786 / women p=.272 | | | | | | | |
| Education | Lower secondary | 40 | 27 | 35 | 14 | 39 | 28 |
| | | (44) | (38) | (6) | (2) | (50) | (40) |
| | Post secondary | 36 | 46 | 35 | 50 | 36 | 47 |
| | | (40) | (65) | (6) | (7) | (46) | (72) |
| | Tertiary | 24 | 27 | 29 | 36 | 25 | 28 |
| | | (27) | (38) | (5) | (5) | (32) | (43) |
| Total sum | % | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| | n | (111) | (141) | (17) | (14) | (128) | (155) |
| men p=.893 / women p=.553 | | | | | | | |
| Work hours | Part-time (17-34h) | 5 | 18 | 0 | 8 | 5 | 17 |
| | | (5) | (23) | (0) | (1) | (5) | (24) |
| | Full-time (35h-42h) | 44 | 56 | 31 | 58 | 43 | 56 |
| | | (41) | (71) | (4) | (7) | (45) | (78) |
| | Excessive (43+) | 51 | 26 | 69 | 33 | 53 | 27 |
| | | (47) | (33) | (9) | (4) | (56) | (37) |
| Total sum | % | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| | n | (93) | (127) | (13) | (12) | (106) | (139) |
| men p=3.81 / women p=.657 | | | | | | | |
| Age / cohorts in 10-year categories | 25-34 | 31 | 35 | 44 | 47 | 32 | 36 |
| | | (34) | (50) | (7) | (7) | (41) | (57) |
| | 35-44 | 32 | 37 | 38 | 27 | 32 | 36 |
| | | (35) | (53) | (6) | (4) | (41) | (57) |
| | 45-54 | 38 | 28 | 29 | 27 | 35 | 27 |
| | | (42) | (39) | (3) | (4) | (45) | (43) |
| Total sum | % | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| | n | (111) | (142) | (16) | (15) | (127) | (157) |
| men p=.311 / women p=.632 | | | | | | | |

Data: Job Mobility and Family Lives Survey 2007, employed men and women living in partnerships (unweighted data).

4.1 Bivariate analyses

Table 3: Intensity of partner's participation in housework and childcare (high value = more done by partner) by gender

| | Germany | | | Poland | | |
|------------------------|---------|------|-------|--------|------|-------|
| | n | M | SD | n | M | SD |
| Who handles housework? | | | | | | |
| Men's reports | 280 | 3.36 | 0.744 | 194 | 3.46 | 0.651 |
| Women's reports | 407 | 2.15 | 0.735 | 220 | 2.40 | 0.748 |
| | p<.001 | | | p<.001 | | |
| Who cares for children | | | | | | |
| Men's reports | 92 | 3.70 | 0.612 | 100 | 3.37 | 0.551 |
| Women's reports | 163 | 2.07 | 0.683 | 99 | 2.55 | 0.665 |
| | p<.001 | | | p<.001 | | |

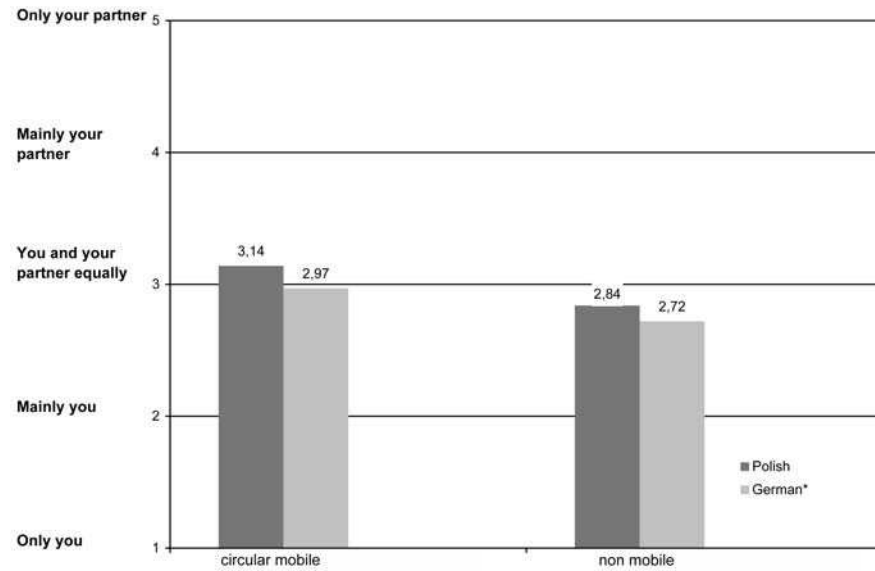
Parameter values: only you (=1), mainly you (=2), you and your partner equally (=3), mainly your partner (=4), only your partner (=5)

Data: Job Mobility and Family Lives Survey 2007, employed men and women living in partnerships (unweighted n presented; weighted data used for significance tests.)

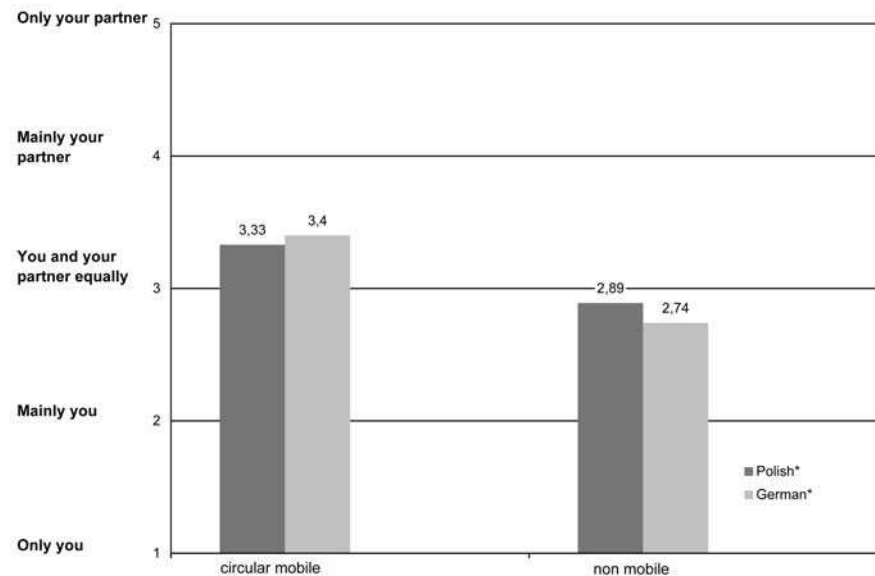
In both countries, women tend to be more responsible for handling housework and childcare, whether as indicated through the women's self-reports of what they do or men's self-reports of what their partners do (see Table 3). The higher averages of men in comparison to women's averages indicate that men are more likely to shift their housework to their partners, whereas women are more likely to do housework and childcare themselves rather than shift it to their partner.

The percentage distribution shows that male and female responses to their share of the housework are not consistent in Germany. Whereas 50% of German men answered that they share housework equally with the partner, only 35% of German women saw the division that way. Previous studies have indicated that men tend to overestimate their own share in housework (Ecarius 2007: 101; Kreimer 2009: 52; Lee/Waite 2005). In contrast, responses of Polish men and women to the equal participation in housework were roughly consistent (53% and 49% respectively). The similarity of answers between men and women in Poland may be a result of national context, or the consistency in Poland could be related to the face-to-face interview format. The answers of Polish respondents could be affected by social desirability (Tourangeau et al. 2000) and the possible presence of a spouse in the vicinity of the interview.

Furthermore, the national comparison in Table 3 shows that partners of Polish women are more involved in housework as well as in childcare than partners of German women. Accordingly, Polish men participate significantly more in childcare duties than German men. In addition, it can be seen that the gap between the averages of Polish men and women is smaller than between German men and women. Polish men, on average, report significantly more involvement in childcare than German men.

Figure 2: “Who of you spends time in handling housework?” by nation and mobility

Data: Job Mobility and Family Lives Survey 2007, employed men and women living in partnerships. Unweighted number of cases: Germany n=687, Poland n=414 (weighted data used in analysis).

Figure 3: “Who cares for children” by nation and mobility

Data: Job Mobility and Family Lives Survey 2007, employed men and women living in partnerships. Unweighted number of cases: Germany n=255, Poland n=199 (weighted data used in analysis).

With regard to mobility, not yet controlling for gender, in both countries mobile persons get more support in housework (see Figure 2) and childcare (see Figure 3) by their partners than non-mobile persons. Looking at mobility and housework by gender, we find that this result is due to the predominance of men in the mobile group and women in the non mobile group, and not due to a statistically significant report of the shifting of housework from mobile people to their partners. However, we observe that men and women in both countries are less involved in childcare if they are mobile, whereas again the strongest difference between mobile and non-mobiles is seen for Polish women (\bar{X} : mobile: 2.88; non-mobile: 2.53). Partners of mobile women in Poland participate more in childcare than partners of non-mobile women.

4.2 Multivariate Analyses on the division of housework and childcare

In the hypotheses 3a and 3b, we postulated that the mobility of women is associated with a reduction in differences between women and their partners in the division of household and childcare, whereas mobility among men leads to their female partners doing more. To test the hypotheses, we use regression analyses, looking at women and men from Poland and Germany separately.

The following table (4) shows two different models for each country, one without interactions (Model 1) and one with interactions (Model 2) between the gender of respondent and (1) circular mobility, (2) work hours, (3) cohort, and (4) child under 16 years.

Table 4: Regression Analyses to predict the intensity of partner's participation in housework (high value = more done by partner)

| Variables | Germany | | | | Poland | | | |
|-------------------------|----------|---------|---------|---------|----------|---------|---------|---------|
| | Model 1 | Model 2 | Model 1 | Model 2 | Model 1 | Model 2 | Model 1 | Model 2 |
| Intercept | 3.03 | .13 | 290 | .16 | 3.14 | .19 | 3.04 | .24 |
| Covariates | | | | | | | | |
| Circular mobile | .10 | .10 | -.14 | .10 | .17 | .15 | .13 | .21 |
| Sex of respondent (f) | -1.18*** | .06 | -.43*** | .23 | -1.00*** | .09 | -.59 | .34 |
| Child under 16 | .01 | .06 | .15 | .07 | .09 | .09 | .17 | .10 |
| Education (tertiary) | .08 | .08 | .08 | .08 | -.01 | .10 | -.05 | .10 |
| Work hours (43*h) | .12 | .71 | .17* | .08 | .15 | .10 | .17 | .14 |
| Cohort (36 to 54) | .16* | .07 | .20 | .11 | .04 | .09 | .10 | .14 |
| Interactions | | | | | | | | |
| Sex * circular mobility | | | -.00 | .20 | | | .08 | .30 |
| Sex * works hours | | | -.29* | .15 | | | -.06 | .19 |
| Sex * cohort (36 to 54) | | | .15 | .15 | | | -.01 | .20 |
| Sex * child under 16 | | | -.69*** | .12 | | | -.39 | .22 |
| F | 72.17 | | 49.70 | | 23.66 | | 14.58 | |
| df | 6 | | 10 | | 6 | | 10 | |
| R ² | .41 | | .45 | | .38 | | .39 | |
| Adjusted R ² | .41 | | .44 | | .36 | | .36 | |

*p ≤ .05; **p ≤ .01; ***p ≤ .001

Data: Job Mobility and Family Lives Survey 2007, employed men and women living in partnerships. Unweighted number of cases: Germany n=687, Poland n=414 (weighted data used in analysis).

All models are significant as models, but in both countries, gender is the strongest predictor in each model. Men report, more often than women, that their partners do more of the housework. Women report that they themselves do more. Testing the effect of mobility combined with socio-demographic variables, the results of both regression models reveal no significant relationship between mobility and the participation in housework for both countries when controlling for other contextual factors. Whereas in Poland the only significant predictor of the housework division is gender, in Germany work hours is also statistically significant, with men – but not women – working more hours receiving more help from their partners. One would expect that a person working excessive hours (more than 43 a week) may receive support from a partner, but women in Germany working excessive hours do not report the support of their partner in doing more housework. An additional component determining the division of labor in German households is parenthood. Mothers are more likely to report that they do more of the housework; fathers report that their partners do more of the housework. The German social context, with limited external childcare, probably plays a role in this finding. Due to the limitations on external childcare, many employed mothers in Germany work part time.

Table 5: Regression Analyses to predict the intensity of partner's participation in childcare (high value = more done by partner)

| Variables | Germany Model 1 | | Model 2 | | Poland Model 1 | | Model 2 | |
|-------------------------|--------------------|-----|----------|-----|-------------------|-----|---------|-----|
| | B | SE | B | SE | B | SE | B | SE |
| Intercept | 3.47 | .19 | 3.32 | .25 | 3.16 | .22 | 3.12 | .28 |
| Covariates | | | | | | | | |
| Circular mobile | .21 | .16 | .13 | .20 | .23 | .19 | .12 | .23 |
| Sex of respondent (f) | -1.58*** | .09 | -1.35*** | .34 | -.79*** | .12 | -.79* | .36 |
| Education (tertiary) | -.01 | .11 | -.22 | .11 | .11 | .12 | .12 | .12 |
| Work hours (43+h) | .12 | .11 | .16 | .13 | .09 | .12 | .22 | .16 |
| Cohort (36 to 54) | .05 | .10 | .19 | .16 | .07 | .11 | -.21 | .16 |
| Interactions | | | | | | | | |
| Sex * circular mobility | | | .20 | .34 | | | .25 | .39 |
| Sex * work hours | | | -.73 | .25 | | | -.18 | .23 |
| Sex * cohort (36 to 54) | | | -.21 | .20 | | | .48* | .21 |
| F | 76.81 | | 47.85 | | 13.46 | | 9.42 | |
| df | 5 | | 8 | | 5 | | 8 | |
| R ² | .63 | | .63 | | .37 | | .40 | |
| Adjusted R ² | .62 | | .62 | | .34 | | .36 | |

* $p \leq .05$; ** $p \leq .01$; *** $p \leq .001$

Data: Job Mobility and Family Lives Survey 2007, employed men and women living in partnerships. Unweighted number of cases: Germany $n=255$, Poland $n=199$ (weighted data used in analysis).

The most remarkable finding is the lack of effects in Poland. While this may be due to the relatively lower sample size (half that of Germany), we hypothesize that the processes determining who does housework and childcare are likely different in Poland compared to Germany. The historical background and current economic situation in Poland create reason to believe that the processes determining whether partners do more are, indeed, dif-

ferent. However, one similarity to Germany can be found as a trend effect in parenthood and especially in the interaction between gender of respondent and child under 16. Also in Poland, mothers tend to be more involved in housework than fathers, an effect that is likely to be statistically robust with a larger sample size.

As in the case of division in household labor, regression models predicting childcare⁷ are significant. For both countries, the results of Model 1 show that gender has the highest explanatory power for the variance on the dependent variable "Who cares for children". An influence of mobility on childcare division could not be determined by these models.

Concerning Model 2, for the predictors of childcare, no factor predicts the predominant caregiver better than motherhood. In Poland, we find statistically significant effects for gender in interaction with age. This effect indicates that Polish mothers aged between 35 and 54, who came of age during socialism, report a more evenly distributed childcare with their partners than Polish mothers who came of age after socialism. Whether the socialist background accounts for the difference or whether other life stage effects are at play is impossible to assess with the data available.

It is remarkable that work hours and commuting do not influence the division of childcare for parents in either country. These results could be related to the relatively small sample size. Further research is necessary to establish whether mobility influences engagement in childcare.

4.3 Level of attitude in comparison to level of behavior

After focusing on the division of work in the domestic sphere, we now turn briefly to examine attitudes towards the division of household work. Interviewees were asked to what degree they agree with the following statement: "In your opinion it is usually better for the children if the man is the main provider and the woman takes care of the home and the family." The results show that nation, more than mobility or gender, is the strongest predictor of agreement with this statement ($p < .001$). Whereas only 25% of the German fully or somewhat agreed to that statement, 64% of Poles were in agreement that it's better if the man earns the money and the woman takes care of the home. Yet attitude does not predict behavior in either country: no significant correlation could be verified between the attitude and division of housework (Germany: $r = -.009$, $p = .814$, Poland: $r = -.051$, $p = .402$), nor between the attitude and childcare (Germany: $r = -.105$, $p = .243$, Poland: $r = .027$, $p = .748$) (results not shown but are available upon request).

5. Conclusion and discussion

The results of our research confirm a number of established findings and add new ones: First, women outperform men in housework within couples in Poland and Germany, according to self-reports of both men and women. Second, Polish couples show a stronger tendency toward an egalitarian division of labor (though still being far from dividing the

7 Regression models concerning childcare include only parents.

work equally) than German couples do, especially in terms of childcare. And, third, there is some evidence that partners who are spatially mobile for work often shift housework to partners who are not mobile, though this effect is strongly mediated by gender.

The central finding of this research is gender trumps national and mobility differences. Men shift housework to their female partners regardless of mobility; women rarely do. And even though Poland and Germany differ, gender is a stronger unifying force predicting involvement in household activities than national context: a Polish woman and a German woman experience more in common with their division of labor and housework than a Polish woman and Polish man. Gender also is more predictive of differences in household work than education, age, and parenthood differences. In short, regardless of whether Polish or German, parent or non-parent, mobile or not mobile, highly educated or not, within employed couples the most dominant trend is that the woman does more housework and childcare. This finding has been seen in the literature before, though here it is tested with regard to job-related spatial mobility and is nonetheless robust. It is striking that, despite the physical absence of mobile employed women from the home, they nonetheless estimate that they do more housework. We examined simple averages for different groups of non-parents to confirm the trend among non-parents. German mobile women report doing more than non-mobile German women by half a point, and more than all German men in the sample: mobile German women average a 2 on the scale, “housework is done mostly by me” and non-mobile German women average nearly half a point closer to “housework is done equally.” German men, whether mobile or non-mobile, average between “housework is done equally” and “my partner does most” (3.2 for both, no difference by mobility of the man in Germany). Polish mobile women (non-mothers), at 2.6 on the scale (between “done mostly by me” and “shared equally”), are reporting more housework than non-mobile Polish men (average of 3.4, or between “shared equally” and “mostly my partner does it”) and than mobile Polish men (who average 3.6).

We thereby find evidence for our first hypothesis: for Germany and Poland women assume more of the housework and childcare, even though Polish women are more likely full-time employed than German women. Furthermore, our second hypothesis is supported, that the division of housework and childcare in Germany and Poland is organized differently. The Germans have a more traditional division of responsibilities in the domestic sphere with women bearing the brunt of these activities. Polish women and men more often share the childcare equally than Germans do. With regard to the third hypothesis about the influence of mobility, mobility seems to have an influence on the division of household labor and childcare within intimate relationships in Germany and Poland, but only because the mobile partner is more likely to be a man.

In *Poland*, a clear visual association can be found between mobility and (4a) housework as well as (4b) childcare for women, but without a statistically significant basis, likely due to the small sample size. We observe that a shift in housework and childcare to the partner takes place for Polish women when they are mobile.

Male circular mobility does not seem to influence (5a) the division of household labor or (5b) childcare in Germany and in Poland. This means that the existing division of gender roles within housework is maintained even when the man is highly mobile.

Testing the effect of *mobility* on the division of labor in the domestic sphere by controlling for gender and other factors (*parental status, education, work hours and age*), the re-

gression shows no statistical significance of circular mobility. To summarize: circular mobility seems to have an influence on the distribution of household tasks and childcare in Germany as well as in Poland at least for men when viewed with binary analysis, but multivariate analysis demonstrates that gender is the primary determinant of who does what, and not circular mobility, work hours, or education. In particular, motherhood predicts most strongly who will report the highest share of housework and childcare in both countries.

Polish couples tend to share domestic duties at least more equally than Germans do, which may be a practical response to the longer legacy of full-time female employment in Poland. In Poland, not only the men but also the women are more often employed full-time, which takes a considerable budget of time. This raises the question for Poles, even without being confronted with mobility, how paid and unpaid work can be managed in a limited time budget. One solution is that work is split between two people to handle everything. As it was shown, this tendency toward equal division of labor increases when mobility is added.

The long tradition of female employment in Poland has likely had some cultural effect on current generations' divisions of childcare and housework. Polish men and women witnessed their own mothers employed full time and were more likely expected to help around the house as children or to have seen their fathers participate in housework and childcare than (West) German children, especially boys. This difference in the cultural upbringing may account for some of the more egalitarian behavior of Polish couples, especially Polish couples in the earlier birth cohort, compared to German couples, and deserves further investigation.

In Germany, however, even despite full-time employment for both partners and in cases where women experience job-related circular mobility, the woman is the one who is mainly responsible for the household. In contrast to an economic rationality for the division, the cultural prescriptions about gender seem to have a stronger influence on the division of household labor, lending support to the "gender display" approach that emphasizes the division of time use as an expression of gender identity (Berk 1985; Greenstein 2000; Hochschild/ Machung 1993).

The discrepancy between the household division itself and the attitudes towards it suggests the disconnection between idealized life organization and the daily realities. That Polish pairs find it better if mothers stay home and fathers participate in paid work may come as no surprise in a culture strongly influenced by the values of the Catholic Church and by the association of women's paid employment with forced socialism. The willingness of Polish men to participate more in childcare than German men do could indicate the family values orientation of Polish couples, or it could also be an indicator of the social construction of gender in Poland being organized along very different lines from the ways it is organized in Germany. In other words, it could be that German men demonstrate their masculinity partly by avoiding "feminized" work like childcare and housework (Baur/Hofmeister 2008), whereas Polish men use alternative gender constructions. For example, participating as a father in caring for children could be part of Polish masculinity, or else the avoidance of it is not important for defining masculinity. Or, Polish father's involvement is simply essential to family functioning, because of the high levels of employment of Polish mothers. Further research, particularly qualitative research, is needed to understand the constructions of Polish masculinity in family life.

In Poland, it is a common phenomenon that a single salary is not high enough to support a couple or a family sufficiently. This financial pressure increases with the presence of children, and is a likely explanation for the higher mobility of Polish mothers compared to Polish non-mothers or German women. In comparison to Germany, Polish couples enter parenthood at a relatively early age, which confronts them with financial challenges in early years (in 2004 the average age of German women at parenthood was 28.9 whereas Polish women were on average 25.6 when they had their first child) (Mynarska 2010). Mobility serves in Poland, above all, as a survival strategy (Giza-Poleszczuk/Stec/Komendant/Rüger 2009). The resulting question is how Polish women combine mobility requirements and family needs. As the analysis has shown, mobile mothers in Poland are supported more by their husbands in childcare than non-mobile mothers. The support from both partners allows the family, despite a limited time budget, better to reconcile mobility and family.

The current study has some limitations. First, our sample of the mobile population was rather small, which limits the statistical significance of the results. Precondition of the participation in the survey in Germany has been the possession of a landline phone, and in Poland, being at home in the summer of 2007 (Huynen/Hubert/Lück 2010). These restrictions mean that mobile persons are probably underrepresented in the sample.

A second restriction of the data is that we only have self-reports and not the reports of both persons who are doing the housework. Most individuals, particularly men, overestimate their own share of housework (Ecarius 2007: 101; Kreimer 2009: 52, Lee/Waite 2005), and so it is difficult to say to what degree the reports measure an objective reality. On the other hand, we have no reason to believe that this self-report bias should be different for mobile and non-mobile people. Further research that could measure the actual time spent in housework, by direct report from each partner, would more objectively measure the division of household labor. These data exist, including overnights away due to work and commuting time (Moen et al. 1999), but they are collected nearly 10 years ago and not in the European context.

One further limitation of the study could be the stringent definition of circular mobility. Those who would consider themselves circularly mobile and behave accordingly but commute just under one hour, or who are away overnight 59 nights a year, are nonetheless in our sample grouped in the non-mobile category. The precise tipping points for a distinction between mobile and non-mobile, if such a point can be identified, requires further research.

Furthermore, the regression model does not capture the processes in Poland, or else the sample size in Poland is too small for effects to be significant. Further research is needed to establish what predicts the distribution of household labor and childcare in modern-day Poland, and how age, period, and cohort may play a role. And this brings us to the final point: mobility occurs to varying intensities and durations across the life course. Earlier mobility experiences are very likely to affect later-life behaviors (Viry/Hofmeister/Widmer 2010). We do not have, in our data, whether the household division of labor of non-mobiles has been shaped by earlier mobility experiences, which could very well be the case. We also could as easily imagine that some mobile people are only recently mobile, but still dividing housework based on pre-mobile lifestyle without having yet adjusted their division based on the new reality of time use and physical absence in the household. Further research that recognizes the life course dynamics of mobility would make an important contribution to our understanding of mobility within family life.

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Addresses of the authors/Anschriften der Autorinnen

Prof. Heather Hofmeister, Ph.D,
Lena Hünefeld, M.A.
Celina Proch, M.A.

RWTH Aachen University
Department of Sociology.
Speciality in Gender and Life Course Research
Theaterplatz 14
52062 Aachen
Germany/Deutschland

E-mail: heather.hofmeister@rwth-aachen.de
lhuenefeld@soziologie.rwth-aachen.de
cproch@soziologie.rwth-aachen.de